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10 October 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Strategic Research

SUBJECT : CIA Memorandum on the Tallinn System

REFERENCE : Director, Strategic Research memorandum,
same subject, dated 23 September 1967

1. The points made in paragraphs 3-5 in your memorandum to me are well taken. I propose that we do instruct our staffs to use their judgment about mentioning ONE's participation in CIA memos which deal with the subject matter of important NIEs. I think we are in complete agreement that measures should be taken to make it impossible for readers of such documents to confuse them with a USIB Memorandum to Holders or, for that matter, with an ONE memo which might seem unilaterally to amend a community judgment as expressed in an NIE.

2. We do, of course, wish to continue the present system of coordinating memoranda. Let's not however follow the procedure used with respect to the memorandum on the Tallinn System. Our staff saw only the summary. We think it important we be given the opportunity to check all parts of all draft memoranda.

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3. On the point in paragraph 3 of your memo -- namely the Possibility of Conflict Between Pronouncements Made in Papers Issued by DD/I Components (and those of DD/S&T and even DD/P for that Matter) and the National Intelligence Estimates, herewith are some thoughts. You should regard them as something I have felt deeply about for a long time (and voiced orally on a number of occasions) rather than something which the particular memo in question in itself has stimulated me articulate.

a. The NIE is a community enterprise, and an important one. All analysts in the community ought to know what NIEs in their area of substantive concern say. This is not asking very much because a lot of these analysts are themselves contributors to NIEs, if not active participants in their production. Since these documents are submitted by the DCI (the pronouncements and judgments which they contain are his) analysts in the Agency should, a fortiori, know their content.

b. In God's-eye NIEs are probably of different degrees of importance. Anyone, by the crudest rules of thumb, ought to be able to identify the most

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important. These, obviously, will be the ones which are most likely to affect decisions regarding the US defense budget (consider the No. 11, 12, 13 and 14 series) and other aspects of US national security policy (consider the Vietnam and Arab-Israeli series).

c. No analyst should modify judgments in this range of NIEs in a document destined to circulate outside the Agency without knowing exactly what he is doing.

d. When an analyst perceives good reason to challenge or alter one of the important judgments of one of these critical estimates, I would like to think that he would:

- (1) invariably call the matter to ONE's attention;
- (2) confer earnestly with appropriate members of the ONE Board and Staff; (3) and make sure, before going into print, that the document he proposes to circulate will signal in some way or other the fact that its authors know what the relevant NIE says and how they feel the judgments of that NIE should be altered.

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e. For example, I think analysts should take special care when producing anything on a subject as important (and as much a matter of community concern) as the Tallinn System. In my view, a memorandum like the one under discussion should make mention, in the text or in a footnote, of the fact that the matter is treated in existing estimates, that it will be treated again (when such treatment is scheduled, as it was in this case), and indication given to the reader of the nature and extent of differences, if any, between our judgments in the memorandum and the most recent estimate.

SHERIDAN KENT
Chairman
Board of National Estimates

cc: Director, Scientific Intelligence
D/DCI/NIFE

[Redacted]

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